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nontraditional
careers for girls



**Utah Wages for Select
Non-traditional Jobs**

Job	Median Hourly Wage
Architect	\$34.19
Automotive Mechanic	16.76
Civil Engineer	29.89
Computer Software Engineer (systems)	37.56
Construction Manager	23.72
Dentist	55.13
Electrician	20.20
Plumber	21.24
Truck Driver	17.34
All Jobs	13.99

Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services,
2007 OES Wages

When my grandmother graduated high school she was told her only career options were to become a school teacher or a nurse. Back then, it wasn't very common for women to work outside the home. Most women married and became homemakers soon after graduating instead of entering the workforce. In those days many people believed that women were only capable of handling jobs that required the same skills as homemaking.

When my mom graduated high school there were a few more career options available to her, such as secretary and cosmetologist. (Well, back then they were called beauticians.) Granted, attitudes had started to change and some doors were opening for women during that time. More women started attending college after high school graduation and a few even entered male-dominated fields, such as science and business. Some women were even able to forge their own paths toward leadership, finding positions in areas such as management and scientific research. However, those individuals were definitely the exceptions. My mom was encouraged to enroll in a typing course after high school to gain career

training. The possibility of, say, entering college to study chemistry, was never presented to her.

True, it was a long time ago when my mom and grandma were sitting in their school counselors' offices, but it's still amazing to think about how much things have changed. The career guidance I'm receiving from my counselor is nothing like what they experienced.

The first and most important thing I've learned about choosing a career is that careers are not just for women or men. Instead, it's all about individual people: their skills, talents, and interests. My friend Katie for example, who is a computer genius (she fixed my blog for me when it crashed), has been encouraged to pursue a degree in computer science. She wants to be a software engineer someday and our counselor has told her to go for it. The counselor also said that while it may be true that there are fewer women in the field than men, it shouldn't prevent her from pursuing a career that matches her skills and interests.

Another important fact I learned is that many of the jobs women have shied away from in the past are actually some of the best-paying. Sheesh! What are we girls thinking? It's no secret

don't let stereotypes
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that women these days are often the breadwinners of the family either as single mothers or even when their husbands work. With that kind of responsibility it's only logical to look into these "nontraditional" career fields. Besides, what girl doesn't want to make good money? Architects in Utah, for example, make over two and a half times the average wage in Utah, yet only 13 percent of them are women. Other nontraditional jobs with high wages include plumbers, electricians, dentists, and civil engineers.

The bottom line is that you shouldn't let stereotypes force you into a career. Focus instead on you as an individual. What are your interests? What are you good at? What makes you happy? If the answers to those questions lead you to think about a career in teaching, or engineering, or architecture, that's great! Just remember, it's all about who YOU are.

For more information about nontraditional jobs for women, check out these sites:

<http://www.dol.gov/wb/>

<http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/wi/pubs/hardatwork>



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